

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for the dewatering of sludge, comprising
adjusting the concentration of the sludge to ~~a pumpable concentration~~ a density of
1.04 to 1.115 metric tons per m² by addition of water,
flushing the sludge through a pipeline to a dewatering field,
mixing the sludge with an aqueous solution of a polymeric flocculating agent while it
is being transported,
allowing the sludge to settle in the dewatering field to form a sediment and partly
freeing the sludge of supernatant and/or drainage water and then subjecting the sludge to
natural evaporative drying,
wherein the polymeric flocculating agent is a water-soluble, anionic, polymeric
flocculating agent that contains from 5 to 30 percent by weight of anionic monomer units.

2. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the anionic
polymeric flocculating agent is formed from anionic and nonionic monomers wherein acrylic
acid, methacrylic acid, itaconic acid, maleic acid, fumaric acid, vinylsulfonic acid,
acrylamidoalkanesulfonic acids, vinylphosphonic acid and/or their salts with alkalis,
ammonia, (alkyl)amines or alkanolamines or mixtures of these monomers are used as the
anionic monomers and wherein acrylamide, methacrylamide, acrylonitrile, hydroxyalkyl
esters of acrylic and methacrylic acid, vinylpyrrolidone or vinylacetamide or mixtures of
these monomers are used as the nonionic monomers.

3. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein a polyacrylamide
formed from polymerized acrylamide and acrylic acid units is used as the polymeric

flocculating agent.

4. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the polymeric flocculating agent contains ~~1 to 40 wt%~~ 10 to 20% by weight of integrally polymerized anionic monomer constituents.

5. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the polymeric flocculating agents have a weight-average molecular weight M_w of higher than 1.0×10^7 .

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein at least two different anionic flocculating agents are used.

7. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the polymeric flocculating agent is added in a proportion of 0.02 wt% to 2 wt% relative to the solids content of the sludge.

8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the polymeric flocculating agent is used in the form of an aqueous solution with a concentration of lower than 2 wt%.

9. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 8, wherein the polymer solution is prepared from a powdery polymer.

10. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the sludge to be treated was obtained from rivers, harbors, the sea floor or sandbanks.

11. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the sludge to be dewatered contains at least 50 wt% of fine particles in the size range of 0.06 mm or smaller.

12. (Cancelled).

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the flocculating agent is metered into the pipeline over a section between the outlet to the dewatering field and 150 m ahead of the outlet.

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein a measuring device in the pipeline determines the sludge concentration, calculates the quantity of flocculating agent therefrom and initiates metering of the flocculating-agent solution.

15. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the sludge treated with the flocculating agent has a density of 1.25 to 1.35 metric tons per m³ after dewatering and before natural evaporative drying.

16. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the natural evaporative drying is accelerated by mechanically turning the sludge.

17. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 16, wherein the mechanical turning is achieved by means of rotary hoes.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the evaporative

drying of the sludge is continued to a density of at least 1.45 metric tons per m³.

19. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 18, wherein the sludge has a vane shear strength of greater than 25 kN/m².

20. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the dewatered and dried sludge is mixed with clays and/or slaked lime and/or cement in proportions of 1 to 15 wt% each.

21. (Previously Presented) A dewatered sludge prepared according to the method as claimed in Claim 1.

22. (Previously Presented) A building material comprising the dewatered sludge prepared according to the method as claimed in Claim 1.

23. (New) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the anionic polymeric flocculant is a copolymer of acrylamide and acrylic acid.